



HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination in Viet Nam

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Fight against **Chống kỳ thị**
và phân biệt đối xử stigma and discrimination



Need for Urgent Response Increasingly Recognized in Viet Nam

“...the threat of epidemics has become greater than ever, with HIV/AIDS and SARS being dire warnings.”

*Mr. Vu Khoan,
Deputy Prime Minister,
CG Meeting, December 2003*



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National Response To HIV/AIDS

- Party Resolution and National Assembly Ordinance on HIV/AIDS issued 1995.
- Increased financial allocation for HIV/AIDS.
- Increased policy support from the Party, National Assembly and Government
- Significant numbers of pilot and other projects undertaken at national and provincial levels by health departments, Youth Union, Women's Union and others



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Evidence shows the epidemic is increasing

There are four important trends:

1. the number of cases is increasing;
2. the epidemic is spreading to the general population;
3. Sexual transmission of HIV is increasing
4. HIV is an epidemic of young people, and the proportion of cases that are aged 15 to 29 years is increasing.



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HIV/AIDS Figures

**Cumulative Number of Reported Cases as of
December 2003:**

HIV Cases	76,180
AIDS Cases	11,659
Deaths due to AIDS	6,550



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HIV/AIDS Figures

But the actual number of cases is even higher:

- 2001: estimated 154,060
- 2003: estimated 215,000

The MOH estimates that in 2003, 1 in 75 households already had a family member living with HIV



CHALLENGE FOR SOCIETY

Spreading HIV Epidemic

- In 4 provinces, more than 1% of pregnant women are HIV+
- 64% of reported HIV cases are among 15-29 year olds
- This youthful HIV epidemic has serious economic implications.



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Stigma and Discrimination

- growing evidence that discrimination against PLWHA is common in Viet Nam, especially in employment and health services.
- Viet Nam society recognises the right to work – yet, PLWHA are often denied the basic right to support themselves and their families.



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The Reasons for Stigma and Discrimination

Two major reasons:

1. People have basic knowledge about HIV transmission, BUT still are not convinced
2. Drug users and sex workers are some of the people first infected with HIV. This links HIV with social evils, and contributes towards stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS



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Preventing Stigma and Discrimination

1. Re-enforce people's understanding about the transmission of HIV, and that there is no reason to fear PLWHA
2. Inform people that the epidemic is spreading to the general population – the wives of drug users, young people. It is no longer only among drug users and sex workers



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Preventing Stigma and Discrimination

3. Remind communities that these are HUMAN BEINGS: someone's son, father, brother. They and their families ALL need support and understanding, however they got infected
4. Identify HIV as a social issue or problem, and not a social evil. Along with reducing stigma and discrimination, this will make HIV prevention programmes more effective, and prevent a larger epidemic.



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National Strategy Approved

**National HIV/AIDS Strategy for 2004 – 2010,
with a vision to 2020 approved by the Prime
Minister in March 2004:**

- Openly acknowledges the increasing HIV epidemic in Viet Nam
- Acknowledges the increased sexual transmission of HIV in Viet Nam
- Identifies needed action, emphasizing mobilization of the whole society



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National Strategy and Stigma and Discrimination

The National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control:

- fully recognizes the problem of Stigma and Discrimination
- Calls for action to prevent stigma and discrimination, and to support PLWHA and their families



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National Strategy Approved

- Identifies the roles of the Party, government, mass organizations and communities
- Identifies the solution to: “Bringing into full play the active participation of HIV/AIDS-infected people and combating discrimination.”



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Role of Rapporteurs

- Communicate the messages in the National Strategy to the society: we should have solidarity with PLWHA and their families, and provide support to them
- Encourage social mobilization for every sector to become involved in HIV prevention, and supporting those infected
- Actively promote compassion and understanding



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***ACT NOW
ACT TOGETHER
FOR VIET NAM***



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